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Louisiana Universities Join Open Science Grid

Baton Rouge --- Through the Louisiana Optical Network Initiative (LONI), Louisiana State University's Center for Computation and Technology (CCT) and Louisiana Tech University have brought the state into the Open Science Grid, an international computing project.

The Open Science Grid is a collaborative, grid computing environment that allows researchers from all over the world to use the combined resources of the member sites to solve complex problems quickly and to work as part of international teams on scientific research.

Both LSU and Louisiana Tech are now listed as sites on the Open Science Grid map. This is important for Louisiana in terms of research and computing ability, allowing state researchers to participate in one of the most advanced and fastest growing grid environments in the world. Until now, there were no sites in Louisiana and very few sites in the southern United States invited to join the grid.

CCT Director Ed Seidel said Louisiana was included on the grid because of the computing resources it has available through LONI and because of the expertise in grids and their applications brought by CCT, Louisiana Tech and other LONI members.

Sites included on the grid have the high-performance computing capacity necessary to conduct research on Open Science Grid projects as well as access to resources that benefit the international science community. The LONI network, which connects supercomputers throughout Louisiana, will add significantly to the Open Science Grid's capacity.

Initially, resources through Open Science Grid will be available for the DØ experiment. DØ is a High Energy Physics experiment being conducted at the Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory (Fermilab) near Chicago. Dick Greenwood, a physics professor at Louisiana Tech University, has contributed significantly to the DØ remote computing effort and is preparing to do the same for ATLAS, a next-generation international physics project based in Switzerland. On DØ and ATLAS, scientists from all over the world are working together to conduct research on the fundamental nature of matter, with the goal of providing more insight into the creation of the universe.

Greenwood ran data for this project remotely by accessing LSU's supercomputer, SuperMike, from Louisiana Tech University. Since DØ computing is supported on the Open Science Grid and both schools demonstrated the computing capacity to work on this project, they became official OSG production sites.

Greenwood said he is grateful for the partnership between the schools that enabled him to conduct the research that led to the state being included on the grid. "LONI, and participation in the OSG, allows Louisiana, effectively, to have one of the most advanced computer networks in the world," Greenwood said.

Both LSU and Louisiana Tech University are LONI partner sites, and according to LONI executive director Charles McMahon, researchers at any of the other six LONI sites who wish to do an Open Science Grid project now will be able to join using LONI's high-speed, fiber optic applications.

To view the Open Science Grid map, please visit http://osg-cat.grid.iu.edu/. To learn more about LONI, please visit http://www.loni.org.